



STATE OF VERMONT
SENATE CHAMBER
115 STATE STREET
MONTPELIER, VT
05633-5201

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

August 23, 2011

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

This letter is in response to your call for comments regarding the proposed AT&T/T-Mobile merger. I am pleased to have this opportunity to share my views on the impact this merger would have on communities in Vermont.

It's been clear for some time that access to wireless, high-speed broadband is a necessity for people, businesses, and communities if they are to keep up with the rest of the world. Our "digital age" demands that communications, commerce, health care, and education move at lightning-fast speed. This creates a problem in small, rural, or underserved communities where wireless broadband is not yet available. Without this access, many people are unable to take advantage of the opportunities that advanced communications technology brings, and the possibilities of the "digital age" lie just beyond their reach.

In areas where there are limited broadband connections, individuals cannot access opportunities for distance learning to improve their education and job options. Local businesses cannot access opportunities for market growth or online expansion (stifling job creation), and communities cannot benefit from economic growth and greater quality-of-life. The AT&T/T-Mobile merger offers the ability to change that: The combined company would be able to deploy AT&T's 4G mobile network more quickly than originally planned and to more places. In fact, this merger promises to expand AT&T's state-of-the-art network to over 97% of America, including rural areas like ours here in Vermont. This would help accomplish a key, national public policy goal of providing Internet access to all Americans, and it would do so through the use of private capital alone by AT&T, no taxpayer funds.

I am optimistic about the effects this merger would have for many communities across Vermont, and I hope you will support it. Thank you for your time and for your service on the FCC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ann Cummings", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Senator Ann Cummings
Vermont State Senate

CC:

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn